



**OPCW**

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**INDIA**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR BHASWATI MUKHERJEE  
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SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

1. It is a great honour and privilege to address the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, under your able Chairmanship. India and South Africa share common historical ties and enjoy the warmest bilateral relations. Recently, the city of The Hague saw the unveiling, in the presence of Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a beautiful bronze statue of former President Nelson Mandela at a specially created site close to the OPCW premises. One of the greatest individuals of his time, his statue reminds us today of the commitment of Africa and all of us assembled here today to uphold international peace, security and justice worldwide.
2. May I convey India's deep appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Paul Arkwright of the United Kingdom, for having demonstrated his great skills at consensus building in the past Conference. Due to his efforts and despite the difficult agenda, the Sixteenth Session of the Conference concluded successfully with a consensual report. India is confident that we would do the same this time. We would also like to congratulate the newly elected Bureau members and other officers, including from our own regional group, who have been entrusted with great responsibility and wish them success.
3. India would like to pay tribute to the excellent and continuing contribution of our dear Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, in implementation of the Convention. One of the important initiatives by our Director-General since the last Conference was to organise a high-level meeting in New York on 1 October 2012 with the UN Secretary-General to reflect on 15 years of the Convention. India's then Foreign Minister Dr S.M. Krishna participated at this Conference and stated, "India views the Convention as an unique, multilaterally negotiated and non-discriminatory disarmament instrument, which serves as a model for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. As an original signatory to the Convention, India attaches the utmost importance to the success of the Convention and its full and effective implementation". The Organisation was also honoured by the visit of His



Excellency, the President of Senegal to the OPCW on 14 November 2012. Another contribution which we will witness today is the unveiling of the monument for the commemoration of chemical weapons victims at a ceremony at the OPCW by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran and our Director-General. India welcomes this initiative which is most timely and appropriate.

4. India would like to associate itself with the important policy statement articulated by the distinguished Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the NAM and China.
5. This Seventeenth Session of the Conference is taking place on the eve of the Third Review Conference. It is the first session of the Conference since States Parties, working in a spirit of consensus, were able to achieve an almost complete agreement to move forward on the destruction of all chemical weapons, after the expiry of the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012. It is also a matter of particular satisfaction that thereafter, the Executive Council at its Sixty-Ninth Session was able to adopt a template on this issue by which the Council would report to the Conference on the progress made on the completion of destruction of chemical weapons as well as on appropriate measures in order to meet the planned completion date.
6. In this period of transition, when we need to take stock and review the progress made in implementation of the Convention and draw up a roadmap for future challenges, it is important to underline that the Possessor States have reiterated their unequivocal commitment to destroy all remaining chemical weapons in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and the completion date that they have individually submitted to this Conference through the Executive Council. As of now, according to the reports of the Possessor States submitted to the Conference, the Russian Federation has destroyed 69.2% of its declared stockpiles of Category 1 chemical weapons while the United States has destroyed 89.75% of its declared stockpiles of Category 1 chemical weapons.
7. A word on the preparation for the Third Review Conference and its preparatory process. We would like to congratulate the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria, Chairperson of the open-ended working group, on the manner in which she has steered the consultations on different articles of the Convention. We eagerly await the draft outcome document which would be circulated by 15 December 2012 and note that there would be only one report for negotiation.
8. It is a matter of particular satisfaction that the Executive Council at its September session was able to achieve consensus on the Organisation's Programme and Budget for 2013. This is indeed in marked contrast to previous years, including the last Conference. The Budget makes a commendable effort to balance available resources as required in the current economic environment. We attach utmost importance to the assurance by the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat that there would be no impact in real terms on funding for international cooperation. This is of great importance for developing countries and is of fundamental importance in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention.
9. Mr Chairperson, India would like to underline the importance of full implementation of Article VII of the Convention. So far, only 48% of the States Parties have the

necessary legislation in all key areas of Convention implementation including establishment of National Authorities. In this context, we welcome the establishment of new National Authorities including in Senegal as noted by the delegation accompanying H.E. the President of Senegal during his recent visit.

10. Turning to Article VI declarations, it is unfortunate that the actual number of facilities submitting declarations have continuously been declining over the past several years. This issue needs to be addressed urgently. On site-selection methodology for OCPFs, as decided at the Sixteenth Session of the Conference, we are eagerly awaiting the report on performance of the current A-15 methodology for site selection to determine how effective the current OCPF selection process is in comparison to the earlier A-14 algorithm.
11. India would like to reiterate that procedures for number, intensity, duration, timing and mode of inspections at Schedule 1 single small-scale facilities and other Schedule 1 facilities require clarification. We would like the Secretariat to evolve clear, transparent guidelines in this regard with the participation of all stakeholders.
12. India would reiterate that we are not convinced that sequential inspections can be truly random as mandated by the Convention. India's paper on this subject presented to the Secretariat and select States Parties have demonstrated that a truly random inspection in India is a remote possibility. We would request that this paper become part of the records of the Conference.
13. A word on SAB and its commendable work in highlighting issues that merit attention. India believes that many other States Parties' new technologies such as combinatorial chemistry and molecular modeling can impact the scientific base of the Convention. We should therefore evolve methods for ensuring that such new and emerging technologies do not have adverse impacts on effective implementation of the Convention.
14. Let me conclude by recalling the prophetic words of one of the most eminent Prime Ministers of Canada, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957, Lester Bowles Pearson, who had stated: "Of all our dreams today, there is none more important – or so hard to realize – than that of peace in the world. May we never lose our faith in it or our resolve to do everything that can be done to convert it one day into reality." On India's part, we would never lose our faith in this dream and would do everything to convert it at this Conference and outside into reality.
15. I would request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference.

Thank you.